



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Job Title: Assistant Curator  
Division: Research & Collections  
Department: Asian Department / East Asia section  
Contract: Permanent, Full-time 36 hours per week  
Salary: £22,227 - £25,875 per annum

### **Background**

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art and design, housing a permanent collection of over 2.3 million objects that span over 5,000 years of human creativity. The Museum holds many of the UK's national collections and houses some of the greatest resources for the study of architecture, furniture, fashion, textiles, photography, sculpture, painting, jewellery, glass, ceramics, book arts, Asian art and design, theatre and performance. The V&A's purpose is to enable everyone to enjoy its collections and explore the cultures that created them, and to inspire those who shape contemporary design.

The V&A has outstanding collections from the Middle East, South and South-East Asia, and East Asia which are curated by the Asian Department. We are currently recruiting for the post of Assistant Curator in the East Asian section of the Department.

The East Asian collections cover several thousand years of Chinese, Japanese and Korean art and design and comprise over 67,000 items. The Chinese collections (ca. 18,000 items) range from archaeological material of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC to 21<sup>st</sup>-century items; Japanese material (ca. 48,500 items) primarily from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day though with some exceptional earlier objects; the Korean collection (ca. 900 items) from the Three Kingdoms period (57BC-668AD) to contemporary works.

Candidates are encouraged to learn about this collection from the V&A website, [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk).

Assistant Curators perform vital roles in a department's everyday operations. ACs utilise specialist skills, knowledge and experience to care for the V&A's collections on display and in store, and to open up those collections to a broad audience both within the V&A and beyond.

### **Purpose of job**

As an Assistant Curator you will perform a vital curatorial role in facilitating the Museum's programmes and projects by supporting the core management of its collections. Assistant Curators, developing their curatorial career, are key member of the curatorial team and are expected to build a knowledge of and commitment to the collections in their care, and to develop as rounded curators with the potential to progress to the next level.

As members of a curatorial team, Assistant Curators apply their professional knowledge and expertise to provide curatorial support to the Museum's Collections Departments and to Museum projects,

effectively liaising with various colleagues across the organisation, including Learning, Registrar, Conservation; Technical Services; Photography Services; and Documentation and Collections Management Services. Assistant Curators spend their time working on object-related activity and maintaining documentation which is relevant and integral to the Museum's collections management policy. All Assistant Curators deal with enquiries from the public - written, by telephone and in person – and a strong commitment to public access will be required.

The range of tasks undertaken by Assistant Curators varies considerably and this provides the opportunity to develop a broad range of curatorial skills at the V&A working with colleagues across Museum activities.

### **Key Responsibilities**

1. Assisting with all aspects of the care of objects for the purposes of collection management and in support of the museum's public programme. This includes object handling, inspection, marking and location moves. This involves liaising and working with technical staff, and it require lifting, carrying and installation of objects.
2. Assisting with interpretation of the collections, e.g. enhancing online catalogue records, gallery talks and tours, group visits. Assisting with the preparation of publications both in print media and online.
3. Assisting with the development of new galleries, displays, events and other aspects of the public programme.
4. Developing specialist knowledge of a relevant area of the collection.
5. Preparing and maintaining documentation, in both paper and electronic forms, contributing to online resources and taking part in regular audit and spot checks.
6. Checking galleries and stores, including environmental monitoring and organising relevant maintenance.
7. Maintaining photography/digitisation programmes. This will involve liaising with photographers and moving objects.
8. Responding to public enquiries; providing access to material in reference collections and study rooms; supervising visitors and facilitating monthly Opinions afternoons.
9. Assisting with the administration, co-ordination and documentation of long- and short-term loans, into and out from the Museum.
10. Acting as a courier for the loan of objects in the UK and overseas.
11. Being committed to health and safety and ensuring familiarity with all of the Museum's health and safety policies and procedures.
12. Being security conscious, ensuring familiarity and co-operation with all museum security procedures

13. Promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of work by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and with respect/dignity and actively contributing to developments that support the museum's strategy for widening access, inclusion and diversity.
14. Carrying out ad hoc duties as requested by appropriate managers within the department, including museum-wide projects.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Essential requirements**

1. Education up to at least degree-level, preferably in an area relevant to the job (qualifications must have been confirmed and awarded at the time of the application) or equivalent experience.
2. Excellent grammatical English and oral and written communication skills.
3. Excellent interpersonal, team and influencing skills
4. Commitment, enthusiasm and responsiveness to opening up the collections to a broad audience, including non-traditional users.
5. Ability to demonstrate a creative and imaginative approach to developing engaging interpretation, ability to "tell a story" to non-experts.
6. Ability to work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders.
7. Ability to manage multiple priorities, and respond dynamically to change.
8. Experience of work in a museum, gallery or closely related organisation, on a professional or voluntary basis. Demonstrable commitment to the museum sector.
9. Proven ability to undertake, complete and communicate research, and to communicate ideas to a wide audience effectively.
10. A demonstrable knowledge and interest in the art and design of East Asia with knowledge of a particular area of the collections.
11. High computer literacy with an ability to manage information systematically and accurately.
12. Commitment to working in support of the Museum's projects and public programmes. Willingness to work flexibly as part of a team in order to achieve collective targets and deadlines.
13. High level of manual dexterity and demonstrable ability to acquire and apply essential core technical skills such as lifting, carrying and installing objects.

14. High motivation and ability to demonstrate initiative. Good time management skills. An ability to set priorities, manage a number of tasks concurrently and function with limited supervision.

### **Desirable requirements**

1. Knowledge of museums and the way they work, including an understanding of collections management such as object handling, storage, documentation.
2. Relevant post-graduate qualification, for example a MA.
3. Working knowledge of an East Asian language.
4. An interest in the collecting and display of Asian art objects during the nineteenth century.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Hours/Salary:**

Net working hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks) are 36 per week.

The salary for this role will be £22,227 - £25,875 per annum. Salaries are reviewed on an annual basis.

#### **Annual leave:**

28 days plus 8 days public holidays

#### **Pension benefits:**

You will be auto enrolled into the Museum's Group Personal Pension Scheme and have the opportunity on completion of Probation to an enhanced pension provision, including an employer contribution of 10%.

#### **Other benefits:**

Non-contributory life assurance policy (to value of 4 x annual salary)

An interest free season ticket or bicycle loan is available after three months.

Free entrance to all the major museums and exhibitions in London as well as many others.

Subsidised staff restaurant

Discounts on purchases in V&A shops

#### **Application process:**

Please apply online via the V&A's website at [www.vam.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.vam.ac.uk/jobs)

If you are having technical difficulties applying online, please use the online chat functionality which can be found on the bottom right hand side of the form. Alternatively, you can contact **Vacancy Filler** directly on **01509 236434**, and quote the role reference number and your application number (if known). Please note, Vacancy Filler are contactable, Monday – Friday between 9.00am – 5.00pm.

If you have any queries regarding the role and/or the V&A's recruitment process, you can email us – [contacthr@vam.ac.uk](mailto:contacthr@vam.ac.uk) or telephone us on 020 7942 2937 (Working hours Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm).

**Interview expenses will not be paid unless there is a prior agreement.**